Carangas—
Chipaya

/388 cont./

The fortune-teller is satisfied to chew the leaves[1] with which he has been provided for his trouble.

Magical treatment of illness.

The medical science of the Indians of the Andean altiplano is very extensive. To be convinced of this one need only go inspect the sector of any native market whatsoever occupied by the chifles, or vendors of medicinal plants. The abundance of vegetable, animal, and mineral products, carefully sorted out in small boxes, which they offer is extraordinary and deserves a long, methodical enumeration. If one considers that each of these substances, in addition to its special properties, also enters in the composition of anomalous and varied mixtures, one will have an idea of the number of medical recipes which the Indians of the altiplano have at their disposal. To tell the truth, many of the treatments recommended by the yatiri are strictly magical in nature; a number of the medicaments which they prescribe, however, are recommendable for their real and effective qualities. The Institute of Ethnology at the University of Tucumán possesses a very complete collection of these products and it is hoped that a study of them will some day be carried out by a pharmacist who is also a botanist. There can be no doubt that such an investigation, already begun by Nordenskiöld (1), has more than one

1. Nordenskiöld (Erland). "Recettes magiques médicales du Pérou et de la Bolivie /Magical Medical Recipes of Peru and Bolivia/," Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris, Paris, New Series, Vol. IV, 1907, pp. 153-174.

surprise in store and /389/ will open new perspectives on the medical knowledge of the Indians of Bolivia.

[1] [i.e., coca leaves--Analyst]

Carangas—
Chipaya

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278 [100] The Čipaya Indians of Carangas have been so deeply impregnated with the influence of the Aymara Indians that we may presume that, in the sphere of medicine, they are hardly distinguishable from their neighbors of the altiplano. It is completely [439] justifiable if their knowledge is more rudimentary because of their isolation and the difficulty which they experience in obtaining the medical substances, almost all of which come from the Yungas. I was able to convince myself of this by examining one day a bag of medicine which had been left by a deceased Čipaya, the father of a young Indian with whom I had a friendly relationship. In the legacy of the old man I found several pharmaceutical products which I had obtained in the Oruro market. The deceased possessed small amounts of them which he had carefully wrapped in some small rags. His son refused to sell them to me, allegedly because [959] of their great value and the difficulty of procuring them. I doubt, however, that anyone in Chipaya could have benefited from them, for, to my knowledge at least, there is no Indian in this village who possesses sufficient skill to carry out their application.

164 757 123 Practically every day in the hut which I was occupying I received visits from Indians coming to ask me for remedies for various ills. The most frequent was constipation, which seems to frighten the Čipaya very much. I was also able to see a hernia and a terrible infection which the Indians treated by applying a [578] piece of llama heart to the abscess. The Indians often called upon me to care for swellings, the result of drubbings which they [842] had not spared themselves in their domestic quarrels. Some also came to beg me to cure them of impotence. In some not very serious cases of swellings or localized pains, the Indians content themselves with sticking a coca leaf on the skin.

757 At present the empirical medicine of the Čipaya seems to be limited to a certain number of insignificant recipes, frequently and easily applied. Faced with a serious case they have recourse to complicated magical processes which I had the good fortune to observe. I should not be able to say, however, if the exceptional